

Florence Township Council Regular Session 3/4/20

Florence, New Jersey
March 4, 2020

The Florence Township Council held a regular meeting on the above date in the Municipal Complex, 711 Broad Street, Florence, New Jersey.

The meeting was called to order by Council President Sandusky at 8:00 PM. Council President Sandusky led the Salute to the Flag.

The Opening Statement was read by the Township Clerk: This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate notice was posted on the municipal bulletin board on January 15, 2020; published in the Burlington County Times on January 14, 2020; placed on the Township website, and given to the Trenton Times for information on January 12, 2020.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Upon roll call the following were found to be present:

Present: Frank Baldorossi, Bruce Garganio, Dave Woolston, Jerry Sandusky

Also Present: Mayor Craig H. Wilkie, Richard A. Brook, Township Administrator, Thomas A. Sahol, Assistant Administrator, Kelly Grant, Township Solicitor; Nancy L. Erlston, Township Clerk

Absent: Paul Ostrander

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Closed Session of February 19, 2020

Motion of Garganio, seconded by Woolston to approve the minutes as submitted. Voice vote – all ayes.

FINANCIAL CORRESPONDENCE

Motion of Baldorossi, seconded by Garganio to approve the **Treasurer's Bill List**.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Baldorossi, Garganio, Woolston, Sandusky

NOES: None

ABSENT: Ostrander

Unanimous vote – Motion carried.

REGULAR CORRESPONDENCE

None at this time.

APPLICATIONS

- A. On-Premise 50/50 Raffle, Roebling Museum, 100 Second Avenue, Roebling, NJ April 25, 2020 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Motion of Garganio, seconded by Woolston to approve correspondence. Voice vote – all ayes.

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PUBLIC COMMENTS

Council President Sandusky opened the meeting to the public at this time.

Seeing no one wishing to be heard, a motion was made by Woolston, seconded by Garganio to close Public Comments. Voice vote – all ayes.

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-69

Cancellation of Payment Plans, Block 166.10, Lot 17 and Block 156.08, Lot 5

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-70

Introduce 2020 Municipal Budget

Mayor Wilkie explained the overview of the 2020 Budget. The tax rate has remained the same since 2012. The water and sewer rates have also been maintained at \$115 since 2012. This Budget includes funding for the 2020 Road Program. The 2021 Road Program has already been discussed to include the third phase of Potts Mill Road. The second phase will be billed this year and we received grant funding for phase 3 which is happening next year.

Mayor Wilkie went on to say that Ken Meisner is a new police officer who is in training right now. This is also going to be the first full year without charging recreation fees. We saw a bump in the fall and winter registrations. We are still looking at the spring numbers and how that adds up. We have two school resource officers in the district now, one fully funded by the township and the other partially funded by both the township and the district. We have instituted health and wellness programs at the community center, which is free of charge for residents. The planning for the 2020 Carnival and the Patriotic celebration are on-going. This is the third or fourth year for the summer camp program. The second year for the Music in the Park series and the third or fourth year for the tennis program.

The hope is that the railroad tracks on East and West Fifth Streets will be removed in the very near future as we continue to move forward on the walkway/bikeway path and will be completed by the fall of 2021. We also have major capital improvements that continue in the water and sewer department making sure that everything is stable and being kept up to date. Recently the water tower on Florence-Columbus Road, which was built around 1998-99, is being repainted and reviewed. Doing these types of maintenance programs is one way to avoid any major issues and to stay ahead of everything.

He explained that the school districts received their funding levies. The Pemberton school district was using old numbers from the 2018 tax levy. In 2019, Washington Township, Pemberton Borough, Pemberton Township, Wrightstown Borough, New Hanover and Mount Holly were the six communities where the average tax levy was less than in Florence Township. We are the seventh lowest and this includes school as well as local and county in the level of taxes. The township and the school district are doing a great job and we all should be proud. We are keeping our taxes stable and when compared to the rest of the county, we are doing very well. A couple of these communities are paying more than Florence Township and do not come close to offering the services that we offer, they do not have local police, and some do not have trash collection. Many of the recreation programs have fees and some are not even run by the township. There is a lot being offered to the community as well as keeping taxes stable.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 2020-71
Self-Examination of Budget**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2020-72
Withhold Future Installments for Special Assessment from the 2020 Tax Sale**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2020-73
Cancel Payment Plan Block 7, Lot 11**

Administrator Brook explained that this resolution deals with the cancellation of a tax payment plan. We always try to work with any individual or resident when we can. The Tax Office spoke to the executor for the estate in December and, unfortunately, there was no response after that. A letter was sent asking him to reach out by March 2nd to see if there was some type of agreement that could be worked out, but we did not hear from him. He explained that everything was done that could be done within reason but we are at a point in time that under state law, and with the tax sale coming up, we are bound and cannot just leave it in limbo. We do have auditors and we do get reviewed so it is his recommendation that it be added to the agenda for cancellation because the plan is behind by quite a bit.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2020-74
Deny Release & Authorize Filing of Claim Against Letter of Credit #RA2263 for L.B. Solar**

Administrator Brook explained that this resolution is regarding the solar project on Florence-Columbus Road. We came very close to having to file a claim against the bond last year. We notified the bonding company and the applicant for the property. This project goes back many years and the overall total of work is still not done. To make sure we protect the township's interest, we would prefer the work be done and to be completed in accordance with the approved site plan. But that is not the case. The resolution that denies the release of the letter of credit has been prepared and authorizes the township to proceed to file a claim against the bond. If the bond is restored or submitted to us before the deadline date of March 28th then they can do that. The township is only seeking to have the gentleman responsible for the project, install the work in accordance with the approval that was done by the Zoning Board.

It was the Motion of Garganio, seconded by Woolston to approve Resolution Nos. 2020-69 through 2020-74.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Baldorossi, Garganio, Woolston, Sandusky

NOES: None

ABSENT: Ostrander

Unanimous vote – Motion carried.

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ORDINANCES

**ORDINANCE NO. 2020-02
Non-Union Salary Ordinance
(Intro & 1st Read)(2nd Read & Public Hearing 3/18/2020)**

Motion of Garganio, seconded by Woolston to approve Ordinance No. 2020-02.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Baldorossi, Garganio, Woolston, Sandusky

NOES: None

ABSENT: Ostrander Unanimous approval. Motion carried.

**ORDINANCE NO. 2020-03
Amending CH. 134 – Loading Zone West Third St.
(Intro & 1st Read)(2nd Read & Public Hearing 3/18/2020)**

Motion of Garganio, seconded by Baldorossi to approve Ordinance No. 2020-03.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Baldorossi, Garganio, Woolston, Sandusky

NOES: None

ABSENT: Ostrander Unanimous approval. Motion carried.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND OFFICERS

None at this time.

REPORTS: ADMINISTRATION

Mayor

The Mayor explained that Thursday, March 5th is Read Across America at the school as part of Dr. Seuss's birthday celebration. The high school is having their musical "The Addams Family" on Friday and Saturday evenings, March 6th and 7th, with a matinee on Sunday the 8th. The middle school's musical will be coming up in a month or so.

Administrator

None at this time.

Assistant Administrator

Assistant Administrator Sahol explained the 2019 park application from the county. He said when grants are done priorities are always listed because they do not always award fully what we anticipate trying to be able to do. The first priority was basically everything that took place in Veteran's Park to include the storage facility, the restrooms and the additional parking to support the ever-expanding field hockey program. The second priority went to Roebling and the third being some trail segments that connect some more of the Broad Street and West Sixth Street areas of Veteran's Park. It was pretty clear that the county looked at our first priority and included the trail connections and granted us the \$175,000. They couldn't reach as far as getting us a second priority work up in Roebling so he mentioned that we are going to be moving forward and is asking the Mayor to execute the agreement with the county that authorizes our funding to the \$175,000 and at least move forward with that. There

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is a possibility that internally he will be coming back with a recommendation to do the additional Roebeling work based on some park funding we have in place or some other source of revenue. He just wanted to inform Council that we are going to be moving forward with first and third priority projects based on the county grant.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

None at this time.

BOARD OF HEALTH

None at this time.

MISCELLANEOUS

None at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Council President Sandusky opened the meeting to the public.

Mark Dimon, 2076 Old York Road, spoke in reference to Resolution 2020-74. He said the inspection was called for but no inspection was done and this is not the first time an inspection was not done on the site. He does not understand the issue because the bond work has been done. There is also the issue that he is said to have built an illegal solar system and yet he has not been fined or served any papers. \$100,000 of his money is being tied up for this bond and years have gone by and he keeps asking to have the bond lowered for the work that is needed and he gets no cooperation from the Township. He said if the bond needs to be called, that is your obligation but the work is completed.

Administrator Brook stated, for the record, that facts and truth do matter. He explained that we have tried to work with Mr. Dimon for years and he is one of the most uncooperative individuals he has ever dealt with in government. He said that Code Official Jim Hoey did not go out to do the inspection because he was called at the last minute with this project which has sat since 2011 and Mr. Dimon has been extremely uncooperative. Richard met with Mr. Hoey and the electrical inspector and they are going to reach out to Mr. Dimon to do an inspection. Had he cooperated at some point we would be in good shape. The whole reason for the delays rests solely upon one individual. He said that he has dealt with Mr. Dimon's 3 or 4 different attorneys and each individual time they have made it quite clear where the delays come from. Richard stated that he is more than glad to have a meeting with Mr. Dimon and other individuals who work for the Township to discuss the facts, as have been done numerous times in the past, as well as when he filed a complaint with the DCA, which was proved to be invalid.

Mr. Dimon stated that the complaint was not invalid.

Administrator Brook restated, on the record, that if Mr. Dimon does the work that is required then we will be fine to move forward.

Seeing no one else wishing to be heard, a motion of Woolston, seconded by Baldorossi to close public comment. Voice vote – all ayes.

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ADJOURNMENT

Motion of Garganio, seconded by Woolston to adjourn. Voice vote – all ayes. Meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Erlston, RMC
Township Clerk
/jns